GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2081
ANSWERED ON:05.12.2014
MEDIA TRIAL
Birla Shri Om

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that tendency of media trial is increasing;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the name of private channels involved in such activities;

(c) whether there is any regulatory mechanism in the county to put a check on such programmes;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and other steps taken or being taken by the Government to ban such programmes?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING (COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.))

(a) to (e): The programmes and advertisements telecast on private satellite TV channels are governed by the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Rules framed thereunder. The Act does not provide for pre-censorship of the programmes and advertisements aired on these channels. However, all these channels are required to adhere to the said codes. The same are available on Ministry's website www.mib.nic.in.

The Government has constituted an Inter Ministerial Committee (IMC) to look into the specific violations of the Programme and Advertisement Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Rules framed thereunder. The IMC either suo-motu or on receipt of complaints, looks into the violations and thereafter gives its recommendations to the Government, based on which action is taken as per rules.

Ministry has also set up a state-of-art Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) to monitor the content telecast on Private satellite television channels on a 24x7 basis.

Besides, as part of self-regulation, News Broadcasters Association (NBA)- a representative body of news and current affairs channels − has set up News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) to consider complaints against or in respect of broadcasters in so far as these relate to the content of any news and currents affairs broadcast. NBSA has issued advisory dated 23.02.2011 on Reporting Court Proceedings to their member channels clarifying that the intention of reporting sub-judice matter is that to facilitate 'fair trial' without prejudice to either side in accordance with the best tenets and practice of the rule of law and not lead to trial by media. Vide another Advisory dated 10.01.2014, NBSA has exhorted its member news channels to bear in mind the various directions/ decisions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and also the NBSA Guidelines regarding reporting of sub-judice matters.

So far as Print Media is concerned, the Press Council of India, a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 with the twin objective to preserve the freedom of press and to maintain and improve the standards of newspaper and news agencies in India and also to inculcate the principles of self-regulation. Accordingly, the Council has framed 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' for adherence by the media. These norms cover principles and ethics of journalism. The Norm 41 (A) on the subject "Trial by Media" is annexed.